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Soviets buzz over 'killer mosquitoes'

From Wire Services

Moscow—A leading Soviet magazine yesterday accused the United States of breeding killer mosquitoes at a medical research center in Pakistan.

The *Literary Gazette*, published weekly by the Soviet writers union, identified the laboratory as the Pakistani Medical Studies Center in Lahore, which it said is affiliated with the University of Maryland and funded and directed by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The magazine's correspondent said he had visited the place and established that it was being used to make bacteriological weapons, it said.

In Washington, CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson denounced the report as "ridiculous Soviet propaganda."

Roz Hiebert, a spokeswoman for the University of Maryland, said, "I've never heard of such a thing in all the research at the University of Maryland. Absolutely not, and I know a good deal about the research that's going on."

The Soviet magazine said, "CIA-recruited American biologists at the laboratories, under the guise of combating malaria, are breeding particularly poisonous mosquitoes which infect their victims with deadly viruses."

It alleged that the aim of the operation was to infect Afghan nomads when they crossed the border into Pakistan and through them unleash an epidemic of encephalitis in Afghanistan itself.

The articles, spread over two pages, were intended to underline Soviet charges that Washington is involved in large-scale production and testing of biological weapons.